the age of 60; old age pension is given at 65 years to destitute elderly and Railways give the facility of concessional fare to those 60 years and above age. The Ministry's own scheme for the elderly identifies as Senior Citizens those 60 years and above age.

(b) As per the latest census of 1991 the number of people above the age of 60 years in the country was 56.68 million.

(c) The Government has a number of ongoing programmes which seek to provide relief and assistance to senior citizens including provision of Old Age Pension for destitute older persons, travel related concessions, Old Age Homes, day care centres and mobile medicare units. A National Policy for Older Persons is under consideration of the Government. The Policy will seek to ensure the well being of older persons by attending to their social security, health care, welfare and other developmental needs.

News-item 'Changing values: coping ageing with dignity

2418. SHRI AKHILESH DAS:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Changing values: coping ageing with dignity" appeared in the Samachar Bureau of New Delhi dated August 30, 1998;

(b) if so, how far the ageing population above 65 in India has been increasing in terms of percentage of the total population over the last five years; and

(c) the steps already taken and being taken to ensure due security and dignity of life for the aged in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House.

Tardy implementation of NSLRS

2419. SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI:
SHRI PARAG CHALIHA:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether implementation of National Scheme of Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers is very tardy;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor, State-wise;

(c) the total number of scavengers identified in the States as also those still to be rehabilitated; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to rehabilitate all the identified scavengers within time frame?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Total number of scavengers identified in the States is 5,77,228 and according to the information available with this Ministry, approximately 2,66,723 scavengers are to be rehabilited.

(d) The Government has established National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC) to provide financial assistance to scavengers to take up projects as per lending guidelines of this Corporation. A National Scheme of Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers is in operation since March, 1992. The Government have also set up a Statutory National Commission for Safai Karamcharis. A Low-cost sanitation scheme for Liberation of scavengers by conversion of existing dry latrines into sanitary latrines and construction of new sanitary latrines where no latrines exist, is being implemented by Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment.